

Amendments to Claims

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15. (currently amended) A dehydrothermally cross-linked, collagen sponge wetted with an aqueous medium prepared by a method comprising:
 - (a) preparing an aqueous dispersion of insoluble collagen or solution of soluble collagen;
 - (b) casting the dispersion or the solution of soluble collagen into a shape desired for end use;
 - (c) freezing the cast shape;
 - (d) lyophilizing the frozen, cast shape to form a collagen sponge;
 - (e) dehydrothermally cross-linking the lyophilized collagen sponge;
 - (f) wetting the dehydrothermally cross-linked sponge in a non-aqueous water soluble solvent; and
 - (g) washing the sponge wetted with a non-aqueous water soluble solvent with an aqueous solution.
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- 85. (cancelled)
- 86. (cancelled)
- 87. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein, in said method, the average cross-sectional area of a plurality of said sponges when wet is within +/-20% of the value for average cross-sectional area of said sponges when unwetted.
- 88. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein the average maximum diameter of a plurality of said sponges is within +/-20% of the value for the average maximum diameter of said plurality of said sponges when unwetted.
- 89. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge is a particulate.
- 90. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge is spherical.
- 91. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge is non-spherical.
- 92. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge has a sheet form.
- 93. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 89 wherein said sponge has a diameter no less than 0.25 mm and no greater than 10 mm.
- 94. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein, in said method, collagen is present in said dispersion in an amount no less than 0.05% and no greater than 10% based on weight of said dispersion.
- 95. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein, in said method, said dispersion or solution further comprises a protein, carbohydrate, lipid, or mixture thereof.
- 96. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge has an average maximum pore diameter no less than 3 μ and no greater than 16 μ .
- 97. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said sponge has an average maximum pore area no less than 10 mm² and no greater than 200 mm².
- 98. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein step (g) comprises washing with a series of mixtures comprising a non-aqueous water soluble solvent and water, wherein progressively higher levels of water are employed from one wash to the next wash.
- 99. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein the lyophilized collagen sponge is subjected to milling in a cryogenic medium before dehydrothermally cross-linking the lyophilized collagen sponge.
- 100. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 99 wherein the milled particles are separated into ranges by sieving in a cryogenic medium after milling and before lyophilization.
- 101. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 99 wherein the lyophilized collagen sponge is subjected to simultaneously milling and sieving the shape into particles in a cryogenic medium prior to dehydrothermally cross-linking the lyophilized collagen sponge.
- 102. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein step (b) involves casting a shape by employing a mold.

103. (new) The collagen sponge of claim 15 wherein said freezing of said cast shape comprises the use of liquid nitrogen.
104. (new) A composition comprising a microorganism and the collagen sponge of claim 15.
105. (new) A composition comprising a pharmaceutical agent and the collagen sponge of claim 15.